



HEALTHY STUDENTS LEARN MORE:

The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Montana Schools



Linda McCulloch, Superintendent
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By the Montana Team Nutrition Program
Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs
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This booklet, also available electronically on the Montana Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs Web site, www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html, provides a variety of information to assist schools in building healthy school nutrition and physical activity environments. Much of the information provided is based on successful strategies and programs currently being used in Montana schools. State agency staff is willing to assist you in learning more about this topic. Please contact either of the following offices for assistance.

Please note: In December 2005, all State of Montana Web pages will change from “.state.mt.us” to “.mt.gov.” This means that OPI’s new Web address will be www.opi.mt.gov, and the School Nutrition Web address will be www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html.

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Montana Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs Mission Statement:

To ensure that schools provide nutritious meals and promote healthy lifestyles through collaborative education and training, and administration of the USDA’s School Nutrition Programs.



FOREWARD

Our schools set the stage for enhanced learning and improved behavior by assuring that during each school day all students have access to nutritious meals and physical activity.

We now know that basic elements of food and activity help children reach their potential, both mentally and physically. Students and teachers benefit from a school environment that supports students in making healthy food choices and staying active. Helping our students make better choices and giving them the opportunity to do so creates a lifetime of healthy habits.

In 2003, Montana's legislators recognized the significance of creating healthy school environments by passing Senate Joint Resolution No. 2, *A Resolution in Support of Healthy School Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment*. This booklet is designed to give you the tools and resources to achieve the goals set out by this resolution.

Montana's students are fortunate to attend schools that value healthy foods and physical activity, such as those schools featured in this booklet. We commend Montana schools on their dedication to promoting a healthy school environment and encourage them to learn from the good examples modeled in this booklet.

We challenge Montana schools, communities, and parents to work together to make schools the healthiest place possible.

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The State of Montana Takes Action for Healthy Children
MONTANA SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 2
PASSED SPRING 2003

Introduced by Don Ryan of Great Falls

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA SUPPORTING A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT BY URGING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO OFFER NUTRITIOUS FOOD AND BEVERAGE CHOICES AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

WHEREAS, obesity in children is a national epidemic and can lead to chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer; and

WHEREAS, the majority of children's diets are not meeting national nutrition recommendations; and

WHEREAS, children make food and beverage choices in a variety of school settings, including school breakfast and lunch, the use of vending machines, the purchase of concessions, and after school programs; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid and health care costs are a growing issue of concern in Montana and are significantly impacted by obesity; and

WHEREAS, good nutrition and adequate physical activity help children grow, develop, and do well in school; and

WHEREAS, healthy bodies and minds are major contributors to readiness to learn, to improved school attendance, and to improved performance in sports and other extracurricular activities; and

WHEREAS, school-based nutrition education and physical activity support healthy eating habits and an active lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, wholesome foods produced in Montana should be available and actively promoted in a healthy school environment; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature needs to identify long-term strategies to reduce the need for public assistance programs, such as Medicaid, and to lower health care costs related to chronic diseases and poor dental health.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Montana Legislature support implementation of school policies that ensure a healthy environment in our schools and that encourage children to eat well and be physically active throughout the school day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Legislature urge local school districts to offer nutritious food and beverage choices and provide opportunities for physical activity whenever possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for distribution to every school district in Montana.



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